/41 cont'd/

585 Care is taken to invite for the event a master of ceremonies (called Lordziwa, from the Tibetan Lo-rgyus, "narration," "speech"); he will be a man highly regarded in the region, eloquent and adroit. He will make all the necessary arrangements, will give orders, will smooth out all the difficulties which could arise, and will pronounce the traditional speeches at the desired moment. He will have at his disposal two well-trained men, whom he will have close at hand and who will serve the guests at the table.

[342 347] The courtyard is made ready for the festivity, for it is there that it will take place; whether it is freezing hard or pouring rain, no matter. Besides, the T'ou-jen houses have no room which could hold 40 or 50 guests. The courtyard usually being rectangular, they build several masonry supports 20 centimeters high, on which are laid planks which serve as tables. These tables are two feet wide. The planks are not fastened together, are not painted, are not /42/ even covered with tablecloths. Fitted together, they form a single piece and are arranged in a horseshoe. /See illustration 5./ The serving is done from inside the tables. The guests are seated on the outside, on pieces of felt spread out on the ground or on straw. Care is taken to hang cloths above the courtyard, which give the illusion of being seated in a vast tent. The decoration of the courtyard consists of some Chinese paper lanterns hung overhead and some red silk streamers, 30 to 40 centimeters wide, draped lengthwise of the courtyard. In a corner two or three Chinese musicians make a racket.

[372] In the middle of the rectangle of tables burns a large fire, the sacred fire of the shamanists. From time to time they throw cypress branches on the fire as incense. Several paces lower than the fire, in the posterior part of the rectangle, are laid out horizontally on two little walls two doors taken off their hinges; they serve as a table where the presents are displayed. Add a few hens which scratch about in the courtyard, several lambs which clutter up the open space, several children who run between one's legs, and that is pretty much the scene of the festivity.